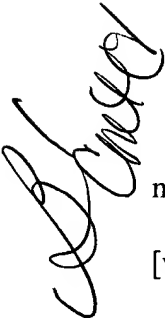


2. (Amended) A foamed partly-finished product[, in particular in the form of a foam sheet material,] according to claim 1, having a density [lying between] of from 25 to [and] 100 kg/m<sup>3</sup>, [and] cell [dimensions in a range lying between] size of from 40 to [and] 600 μm and [with] a cell distribution such that 80% of [them] the cells have, in the absence of stretching, a [dimension lying between] size ranging from 25 to [and] 300 μm.

 3. (Amended) A foamed partly-finished product[, in particular in the form of a foam sheet material,] according to claim 2, having a density [lying between] of from 30 to [and] 70 kg/m<sup>3</sup> and [with] a cell distribution such that 80% of [them] the cells have, in the absence of stretching, a [dimension lying between] size ranging from 30 to [and] 200 μm.

4. (Amended) A foamed partly-finished product[, in particular in the form of foam sheet,] according to claim 3, having a density [lying between] of from 30 to [and] 70 kg/m<sup>3</sup> and average cell [dimensions lying between] size ranging from 80 to [and] 120 μm.

5. (Twice Amended) A foamed partly-finished product according to claim 1, [in which] wherein the starch is selected from the group consisting of natural starch, [or] modified starch [or] and a mixture of these.

6. (Amended) A foamed partly-finished product according to claim 5, wherein [in which] the natural or modified starch is derived from one of potato, wheat, maize and tapioca.

7. (Amended) A foamed partly-finished product according to claim 5, wherein the modified starch is selected from the group consisting of physically or chemically modified starches, [particularly] ethoxylated starches, acetate starches, butyrate starches, propionate starches, hydroxypropylated starches, cationic starches, oxidated starches, cross-linked starches, gelatinised starches, starches complexed with molecules and/or polymers able to give "V" type complexes, dextrinated starches and starches grafted with chains [such as] selected from polyesters, polyurethanes, [polyesters-] polyester-urethanes, polyureas, [polyesters] polyester-ureas, [polysiloxanes] polysiloxanes, silanes, titanates, and fat chains.

8. (Twice Amended) A foamed partly-finished product according claim 1, [able to form] in the form of products with hinges obtained in a forming phase capable of resisting at least ten consecutive opening/closing cycles at 35% RH and 23°C without breaking, by using 2 - 4 seconds for each opening and closing operation.

---


9. (Please cancel.)

---

10. (Twice Amended) A foamed partly-finished product according to claim [9 in which] 1, wherein the intrinsic viscosity in DMSO at 30°C is from 0.4 to 1.2 dl/g [lying between 1.2 and 0.4 dl/g].

11. (Amended) A foamed partly-finished product according to claim 10, [in which] wherein the intrinsic viscosity in DMSO at 30°C is [lying between 1.1 and 0.6 dl/g] from 0.6 to 1.1 dl/g.

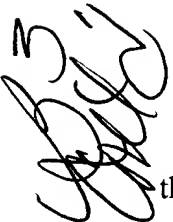
12. (Twice Amended) A foamed partly-finished product according to claim 1, containing one or more thermoplastic polymers with a melting point [lying between] of from 60 to [and] 175°C.



13. (Amended) A foamed partly-finished product according to claim 12, [in which] wherein the thermoplastic polymer is selected from the group consisting of a polymer of natural origin which can be modified or non modified, [in particular] a polymer derived from cellulose as cellulose acetate, cellulose propionate, cellulose butyrate and their co-polymers, with a degree of substitution lying between 1 and 2.5; polymers of the alkyl cellulose, hydroxy alkyl cellulose, carboxy alkyl cellulose type, [in particular] carboxy methyl cellulose, nitrocellulose and chitosan pullulan or casein and casinate, zein, soya protein, alginic acid and alginates, natural rubbers, polyaspartates; glutens, and dextrens.

14. (Amended) A foamed partly-finished product according to claim 12, [in which] wherein the thermoplastic polymer is [a] selected from the group consisting of biodegradable polymers of synthetic or fermentative origin, [in particular] polyesters of the type including polymers or co-polymers of C<sub>2</sub>-C<sub>24</sub> aliphatic hydroxy acids, or their corresponding lactones or lactides, [in particular] polymers of lactic acid having various D/L lactic acid ratios, co-polymers of polylactic

acid with aliphatic and aliphatic-aromatic polyesters, polycaprolactone, polyvalerolactone, their co-polymers and also polyesters derived from difunctional acids and aliphatic diols, aliphatic-aromatic polyesters, [in particular] co-polymers of the type including alkaline-terephthalate adipate treated or not with chain extenders, [preferably] optionally with quantities of tereftalic acid less than forty mole percent, epoxy resin [in general] and bisphenolic resin [in particular].



15. (Amended) A foamed partly-finished product according to claim 12, [in which] wherein the thermoplastic polymer is a polymer containing hydrophilic groups intercalated in hydrophobic sequences [such as, for example,] selected from the group consisting of ethylene-vinylalcohol co-polymers, ethylene vinylacetate co-polymers, acrylic esters, acrylic ethylene-ester co-polymers, co-polymers of ethylene with unsaturated acids [such as] selected from the group consisting of acrylic acid, methacrylic acid, crotonic acid, itaconic acid, co-polymers with hydrophilic units with a functional alcoholic a carboxylic group in aliphatic polyesters and/or aromatic-aliphatic polyesters, and epoxy resins including resins containing bisphenols.

16. (Amended) A foamed partly-finished product according to claim 12, [in which] wherein the thermoplastic polymer is a polymer able to form hydrogen bonds with the starch[, in particular] selected from the group consisting of polyvinyl alcohol with various degrees of hydrolysis, [possibly] optionally modified with acrylates or methacrylates, and polyvinyl alcohol preliminarily plastisized or modified for the purpose of lowering its melting point.

17. (Amended) A foamed partly-finished product according to Claim 12, containing polymers [such as] selected from the group consisting of polyvinylalcohol, copolymers of an olefin polymer, [preferably] ethylene, with a monomer chosen from vinyl alcohol, vinyl acetate, acrylic acid and methacrylic acid, aliphatic polyesters, [such as] caprolactone, the polyalkylene succinates, the polymers of azelaic acid, sebacic acid, brassilic acid and their co-polymers, aliphatic polyamides, polyalkylenesebacates, polyalkylene-azelates, polyalkylenebrassilates, [in particular] with diols comprised between C<sub>2</sub>-C<sub>13</sub>, polyesters containing dimeric acids, aromatic-aliphatic polymers of the polyalkylene terephthalate adipate type and the epoxy resins, [particularly] with bisphenolic groups.

18. (Twice Amended) A foamed [Partly-finished] partly-finished products according to claim 1, containing nucleating agents for the starting composition in concentrations [lying in the range] of from 0.05 to 10% by weight[, preferably between 0.5 and 7% and more preferably between 1 and 5%].

19. (Amended) A foamed partly-finished product according to Claim 18, [in which] wherein the nucleating agent is constituted by inorganic compositions [such as] selected from the group consisting of talc (magnesium silicate), calcium carbonate, sulphates of sodium and barium, titanium dioxide, [possibly] optionally surface treated with adhesion promoters [such as silanes, titanates].

20. (Twice Amended) A foamed partly-finished product according to claim 1, containing organic fillers and fibres [such as] selected from the group consisting of wood powder, cellulose,

grape residue powder, bran, maize husks [or] and other natural fibres in concentrations [between] of from 0.5 [and] to 20%.

21. (Twice Amended) A foamed partly-finished product according to claim 1, containing nucleating agents, lubricants and/or dispersants and plasticisers.

22. (Twice Amended) A foamed partly-finished product according to claim 1 containing alimentary oils [such as] selected from group consisting of palm oil, maize oil, soya oil, sunflower oil, C<sub>12</sub> to C<sub>22</sub> fatty acids, their glycerides with various degrees of substitution, and [in particular] hydrogenated fats of animal or synthetic origin which are solid at least at ambient temperatures, [and] or [preferably] above ambient temperatures, to improve the moisture resistance and reduce the wetability by water.

23. (Twice Amended) A foamed partly-finished product according to claim 1 containing weak acids [such as] selected from the group consisting of lactic acid, tartaric acid, and citric acid to regulate the viscosity of the starch during the extrusion process.

24. (Twice Amended) Products and partly-finished products obtained from the foamed partly-finished products of claim 1, obtained by lamination with layers of non-woven fabric, woven fabric, paper, biodegradable and non-biodegradable films or aluminium.

25. (Amended) Products and partly-finished products according to claim 24 produced by lamination with non-woven fabric or woven fabric of natural fibres, [such as for example fibres of

26. (Amended) Products and partly-finished products according to claim 24 coupled with films constituted by biodegradable polymers [and in particular aliphatic polyesters such as polylactic acid, polycaprolactone and/or cycloaliphatics, polyalkaline carboxylates with dialcohols and diacids selected from the linear range  $C_2$ - $C_{13}$ , aliphatic-aromatic polyesters, in particular from the family of adipated terephthalate polyalkylenes and their co-polymers, polyamides, in particular based on caprolactam, aliphatic amines etc, aliphatic polyurethanes, polyester-urethanes, polyureas, epoxy resins obtained by blown extrusion, co-extrusion and/or casting].

27. (Twice Amended) Products and partly-finished products obtained from the foamed partly-finished products of claim 1, by way of coating with emulsions, dispersions, solutions, hot melts of biodegradable polymers [and in particular aliphatic polyesters such as polylactic acid, polycaprolactone, polyalkylene carboxylates with dialcohols and diacids selected from the linear and/or cycloaliphatics range  $C_2$ - $C_{13}$ , aliphatic-aromatic polyesters, in particular from the family of

adipated polyalbylene terephthalates and their co-polymers, polyamides, in particular based on caprolactane, aliphatic amines etc, aliphatic polyurethanes, polyester-urethanes, polyureas, epoxy resins].

28. (Amended) Products and partly-finished products according to Claim 26, in which the films are coupled to the partly-finished products by temperature and/or the application of suitable biodegradable adhesives based on polymers of lactic acid, polyurethanes, polyvinylactates and polyvinylalcohols, proteins [such as casein and gluten], starches, dextrans and other polysaccharides.

29. (Twice Amended) Products and partly-finished products according to Claim 26, [in which] wherein the films can be obtained from cast and bubble film-forming and can be co-extruded with an adhesive surface for the foamed support.

30. (Amended) Products and partly-finished products according to Claim 29, [in which] wherein the films have a melting point greater than 60° C [, preferably greater than 80°C and more preferably greater than 100°C].

31. (Twice Amended) A sheet according to Claim 26 [form able] formable as a non-laminated sheet.



*32*  
32. (Twice Amended) Products and partly-finished products obtained from the materials of claim 1, treated with natural and synthetic waxes with melting points up to 120°C [in depending on their various applications].

---

33. (Withdrawn)

34. (Withdrawn)

35. (Withdrawn)

36. (Withdrawn)

37. (Withdrawn)

38. (Withdrawn)

*39*  
39. (Twice Amended) Combinations of partly finished product according to claim 1 in multilayer structures to form products of various geometry [such as rolls, blocks and foam sheet of significant resilience, corner pieces, protective containers for use in the electrical domestic appliance sectors, or for electronic products, in the food sector, for pharmaceuticals, for design and furniture, for mail order or envelopes for couriers].

40. (Twice Amended) Combinations of materials according to claim 1, with other supports to provide multilayers mixed with wood, paper, cardboard, non-woven fabric, woven fabric of natural or synthetic fibres, aluminium or other metals [for use in the packaging sector].

---

U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/784,707

41. (Withdrawn)

42. (Withdrawn)

43. (Withdrawn)

44. (Withdrawn)

45. (Withdrawn)